DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 413 000 JC 970 556

AUTHOR	Armstrong, William B.; Lewis, Mary; Neault, Lynn C.
TITLE	Americans with Disabilities Act Mesa College Self-Evaluation Study.
INSTITUTION	San Diego Community Coll. District, CA. Research and Planning.
PUB DATE	1997-02-00
NOTE	36p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Accessibility (for Disabled); Assistive Devices (for Disabled); Community Colleges; *Compliance (Legal); Disabilities; Educational Resources; Faculty Development; Focus Groups; Institutional Evaluation; *Self Evaluation (Groups); Staff Development; Student Attitudes; Teacher Attitudes; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS	*Americans with Disabilities Act 1990; San Diego Community College District CA; San Diego Mesa College CA

ABSTRACT

In 1997, the San Diego Community College District conducted a self-evaluation study of Mesa College to assess its compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Ten focus groups discussed their knowledge and views of the ADA. Findings for the Student and Disabled Student Group indicated that while there was a general lack of awareness of special needs and available services for individuals with disabilities; students did acknowledge certain instructional accommodations. Administrators demonstrated knowledge of programmatic and instructional accommodations and declared a commitment to informing staff of ADA policies. Staff held divergent views, with some staff feeling that most provisions of the ADA had been accomplished, while others noted areas in need of improvement. Staff training and campus reviews were advocated. The Student Services and Disabled Student Programs and Services Department Staff felt the need for continuous discussion of access issues and greater classroom space. The faculty acknowledged the instructional accommodations made, and were aware of the employment regulations of the ADA. The college police and the special admit programs believed that there was architectural accessibility for the disabled. Site compliance officers corroborated the aforementioned observations, but felt the need for improved access to information. (YKH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 413 000

SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

(ADA)

SELF-EVALUATION STUDY

(MESA COLLEGE FINDINGS)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
W. B. Armstrong
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

FEBRUARY 1997

JC 970 386

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

San Diego Community College District

Americans with Disabilities Act

Mesa College Self-Evaluation Study

Prepared by:

William B. Armstrong
SDCCD Institutional Research

Mary Lewis
SDCCD Disabled Students Programs & Services

Lynn C. Neault
SDCCD Assistant Chancellor, Student Services

February, 1997

San Diego Community College District

Americans with Disabilities Act

Mesa College Self-Evaluation Study

Background

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) is a comprehensive civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities in the areas of employment, public accommodations, state and local government services, transportation and telecommunications. Title II, Subtitle A, became effective on January 26, 1992, and all programs, activities, and services of public institutions are subject to its provisions. Under Title II, a public agency or institution must make its programs, activities, and services accessible and useable for individuals with disabilities. The only exception to these fundamental provisions of usability and accessibility would be if complying with these mandates ...*would result in a fundamental alteration in the nature of its programs, activities, or services, or would result in undue financial an administrative burdens.*

As a public educational institution, the San Diego Community College District (SDCCD) is subject to the provisions of the ADA and has taken steps over the years since its passage to ensure its implementation. The SDCCD has sponsored workshops for SDCCD staff to learn about the background, goals, and provisions of the ADA and its implications for the SDCCD. In addition to central coordination at the district level through the provision of information workshops, the individual colleges in the SDCCD have also appointed local Site Compliance Officers (SCO's). These officers are responsible for providing support for affirmative action compliance at the colleges and liaison for individuals with complaints to SDCCD staff. They are also available to help interpret and ensure compliance with the provisions of the ADA at the campus and center level.

Purpose

The regulations governing the implementation of the ADA are comprehensive with respect to how affected entities are to ensure access, both architectural and programmatic, for individuals with disabilities. Beyond identifying and remediating architectural barriers, the ADA has other provisions that may be more complex and difficult to measure. For example, the anti-discrimination provisions of the Act are comprehensive and far-reaching. Barriers to full participation in programs and services are viewed in much the same way as are architectural barriers to access. As with architectural barriers, public institutions and agencies are to identify and remove all non-essential barriers or impediments to ensure full participation in programs and services. Section 35.105 of the US Department of Justice's regulation implementing Title II requires all affected institutions to conduct an appraisal or self-evaluation of local compliance with the anti-discrimination features of the Act. For example one of the intended outcomes of this legislation and the implementing regulations was to raise both the awareness of access and opportunities for equal participation by individuals with disabilities. Affected entities were also instructed to take steps to ensure that awareness is demonstrated by staff who potentially work with individuals with disabilities in the college. This need to both inform and evaluate the awareness of ADA compliance has led to the focus group interview approach taken here in the SDCCD. The activity of those participating in the focus group discussion coupled with the pre-focus group survey and the discussion during the group meeting enables participants to evaluate the level of their own awareness and learn from others. This approach also allows for evaluators to determine the effectiveness of efforts taken to improve awareness and knowledge of relevant law and approaches to assisting those with disabilities to access programs and services. In meetings held between the Assistant Chancellor for Student Services, the Manager of DSP&S, and the Research director, the focus group approach emerged as the most effective means to both educate college and district staff as well as evaluate the level of ADA awareness levels.

Section 35.105 of the U.S. Department of Justice's regulations implementing Title II requires all public entities to conduct a self-evaluation to be completed by January 26, 1993. However, the law also states that public entities are liable for any discriminatory policies or practices in effect after January 26, 1992. As a result, *any* discriminatory practices or policies identified by the self-evaluation process

should be modified immediately. Until this work was undertaken to identify potential program and non-architectural barriers to full participation in SDCCD programs and services, little systematic effort had been expended to gather this information other than through the complaint process. This effort should be viewed as both complying with federal law, and as preventative work to identify practices or policies that fail to provide equitable access for individuals with disabilities. Prior to this work, there has not been any systematic effort to evaluate the effectiveness of the SDCCD ADA awareness efforts. This report, while not exhaustive is therefore a significant first step in both compliance and in evaluating our efforts at education and staff development.

The ADA defines a person as having a disability when they:

1. Have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities,
2. Have a record of a physical or mental impairment that substantially limited one or more of the individual's major life activities, or mental impairment that substantially limited one or more of the individual's major life activities, or,
3. Are regarded as having such an impairment, whether they have the impairment or not.

The term disability thus covers a wide range of conditions and includes mobility, vision, hearing or speech impairments, learning disabilities, chronic health conditions, emotional illnesses, HIV disease (whether symptomatic or asymptomatic) and a history of drug addiction.

A qualified individual with a disability is someone who meets the eligibility requirements for participation in SDCCD disabled programs and services. This person falls under this definition with or without any SDCCD effort to modify any rules, policies, regulations, remove architectural, communication, or transportation barriers, or provision of auxiliary aids and services.

Through this self-evaluation, the SDCCD colleges and centers must:

1. Evaluate current services, policies and practices, and identify those that do not meet Title II requirements, and
2. Specify what modifications will be made to identified services, policies or practices that deny or limit participation of individuals with disabilities in their educational

programs or activities. Areas that need careful examination include, but are not limited to: general policies and practices, communications, auxiliary aids, eligibility and admission requirements, evacuation from buildings, employment, building and construction policies, and architectural barriers.

Physical Access

Accessibility for individuals with disabilities is often viewed solely as architectural access. The ADA, however goes beyond this concept to require that all services, programs, and activities are accessible. An extensive review of architectural barriers to program accessibility in the SDCCD was completed February 1, 1993. The campus ADA Transition Plan can be found in the Business or Facilities Office. The intent of this review was to identify the major physical barriers to program access. Participants were asked to identify other impediments to access in Section I of the ADA Compliance Survey in preparation for the focus group discussions.

Prior to meeting in the focus group activity, individuals selected for participation were sent a survey that covered the intended discussion of the focus group. Respondents were asked to complete the survey prior to attending the focus group. This was done to help focus discussion, and to provide a review or for some respondents, a first look at the terms, issues, and guidelines of the ADA as it applies to educational institutions. It is the function of this survey to cover the programmatic aspects of accessibility. For the sake of brevity, the term "program" will be used in this report as inclusive of the phrase, "programs, activities, and services." The survey was designed to provide a framework for the conduct of focus groups for the required ADA self-evaluation.

Nine focus groups were identified at each college or center to complete the self-evaluation survey prior to their participation in the focus groups. Individuals were selected for participation in the focus group were chosen by the college and continuing education presidents. Participants were asked to first complete the self-evaluation surveys and bring their responses to the focus group meeting. Participants were given the opportunity to change, add, or delete any responses during the focus group discussions. The surveys were thus intended and designed to make the focus group discussion more directed and informative.

Respondents were chosen according to their membership or affiliation in a particular group. Respondents were chosen to participate in one of ten focus groups. Groups were formed comprised of:

1. Students
2. Students with disabilities
3. Academic and Student Services Managers
4. Classified Staff
5. Student Services Staff
6. Disabled Services Program and Services Staff
7. Faculty (including counselors and librarians)
8. College Business Office and Facilities Staff
9. Special Admit Program Representatives
10. Districtwide Group for 504 Site Compliance

Mesa College Findings

Student and Disabled Student Focus Group

In the fall, 1996 term several disabled and non-disabled students were asked to participate in a focus group at Mesa College. Only three of the identified disabled and one of the non-disabled students participated in the focus group meetings and survey completion. Because of this the responses for both disabled student grouping and the non-disabled student grouping were combined to strengthen the reliability of the findings.. The following discussion briefly summarizes the findings of the student focus group interviews and combines the information received from both student groupings.

Access to Programs

Students did appear to be somewhat aware of how many students and faculty with disabilities had identified themselves to the particular program they were involved in. The disabled students stated that they were aware of some faculty who were disabled and need special services, but neither grouping could identify any staff members in need of special services. The students did not indicate that they knew of

other staff or faculty with disabilities who had not identified themselves. The students were not able to identify any modifications made to policies or programs for individuals with disabilities since January 26, 1992 which is noted in the legislation and regulations as a point of reference to note program changes or modifications.

Students indicated some knowledge concerning the provision of auxiliary aides or accommodations to individuals with disabilities in particular programs at Mesa College. In the instructional area students cited the availability of interpreters, note takers, tape recorders (with instructor approval), revised seating arrangements in class, and tutoring services. In the area of support services the students noted the availability of priority registration, test proctoring, and temporary disabled parking. The DSP&S office at Mesa was mentioned as helpful in providing physical modifications to aid in the instructional process. Specific examples included modifying a drafting table, desks, and other physical arrangements of a non-architectural nature. The students did not state that they were aware of policies and programs that needed modification in order to include individuals with disabilities in a particular program or service such as field trips or outings. This did not seem to be a problem in the opinion of the interviewees.

Students indicated that emergency telephone services were provided by the program, but were mixed in their knowledge concerning direct tty and modem access to emergency services to individuals with disabilities. Some were aware while others were not. No clear recommendation could be made from this finding other than for local staff to make certain as many are informed as possible about the availability (or lack thereof) of these emergency telephone services via tty or modem.

There were also mixed perceptions about the architectural accessibility of all programs at Mesa College. A couple of the students did not know or stated that not all programs were architecturally accessible questioned if potential users were informed of this accessibility. A specific example cited was the chemistry lab where the disabled student indicated that the bench top was too small and dangerous for them to use. Another example given were inaccessible doors to both the women's locker room and the cafeteria. It was suggested that individuals with disabilities be able to automatically open these doors with a push button. However all the students did state that campus events were programmatically accessible

through the provision of interpreters, captioned video, assistive listening devices, and large print, Braille handouts or programs. None of the interviewees were aware that they could submit unlawful discrimination complaints based on disability. Nor were any of the students aware of any planning or advisory boards on which individuals with disabilities serve.

Students were generally unaware and hence not able to list some smaller architectural features (those not apt to be found in the Transition Plan) that limited access to programs. The only area mentioned for improvement was a lack of privacy in the restrooms at the college for the physically disabled. Students were split on the perception that following admission, inquiries about student's disability were collected only on a voluntary basis. Most did not know, while one respondent thought that inquiries about an individual's disability status were collected in a non-voluntary way.

Classroom and Curriculum

Students were divided on the question regarding the use of tape recorders in the courses they have taken. The disabled student however did indicate that tape recorders were available and could be used with the instructor's permission. They were also unclear as to the availability of Braille note taking devices. There was more agreement that attendants, note takers and sign language interpreters were available and provided for individuals with disabilities. However non-disabled students were not as aware of these services. According to the students, guide dogs were allowed on campus and in classrooms and that additional accommodations are made for students needing modified exams or tests in class Students were not aware that certain courses could be substituted in the event that students with disabilities could not be accommodated in them. Students indicated that registration was facilitated by the use of a phone registration system, but were not aware of a special number or access services for individuals with disabilities to accommodate them in the registration process. However none cited the registration process as limiting access for individuals with disabilities.

Computers and Information Technology

In this area of the interview, respondents were asked about access to information for individuals with disabilities. These questions focused on the availability of adaptive technology to facilitate access to computer hardware and software. These adaptations included print enlargers, speech output systems,

document scanners and Braille printers. In this section of the interviews, environmental adaptations refer to physical access to the computing facility and within the facility. This may include directional signs to indicate a computer lab with adaptive equipment such as wheelchair access with unlocked, accessible doors between the building entrance and the lab, accessible rest rooms, and adaptive equipment in labs that are open a maximum number of hours.

Students were not aware of any computing labs or classrooms locatred in buildings that were not accessible to individuals with disabilities. According to a disabled student, adaptive technology was available to students needing it for computer use. Non-disabled interviewees did not know if computers for use by individuals with disabilities were found in the same location as computers for non-disabled students while the disabled interviewee stated that the adapted computers were not found in the same room as other computers. The computer adaptations for individuals with disabilities that were cited by the students included labels giving priority for use by those with disabilities, detachable keyboards and monitors, accessible on-off switches, raised dot indicators on keyboards, Braille labels, interpreters and notetakers, and accessible printers at table height. One of the students indicated that although labels on the adapted computers indicated priority use by individuals with disabilities, this protocol was seldom observed. The student acknowledged that this was behavior on the part of individual students and not a policy of the college.

General Comments

The relatively small number of respondents makes generalization difficult. There were obvious differences in level and amount of knowledge concerning programmatic access between the disabled respondent and non-disabled students. There was a general lack of awareness of whether a student could file a discrimination complaint or whether individuals with disabilities serve on any governing or leadership bodies. The technology used for registration enabled access by a broad array of students, although none of the students were aware of any special telephone numbers or assistance with the registration process available to individuals with disabilities. Students cited the availability of special instructional accommodations such as tape recorders, note takers, interpreters, and computer adaptive

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

facilities. One disabled student indicated that the rest rooms were difficult to maneuver in and suggested greater privacy be provided for individuals with disabilities.

Administrative Interview

In late February, 1997, administrators from Mesa College were asked to participate in a focus group to determine ADA compliance and awareness. Of the two invitees, one participated in the meeting. However the interviewee received comments and ideas from her colleagues prior to the meeting and was able to represent a broad segment of the administrative team at the college. The following summarizes the responses to the interview questions.

Access to Programs

Administrators were generally aware of the number of students with disabilities in their particular program and were unaware of any individuals with disabilities who had not yet identified themselves as having some sort of disability. A specific example of a programmatic accommodation for students with partial or lack of hearing was a class in the English department designed for individuals with a hearing disability. The interviewee stated that the programs at Mesa provided auxiliary aids and accommodations to individuals with disabilities. There were several examples cited. Among them were accessible work stations in the library and computing lab, closed circuit television for enlarged type, a swimming pool hoist, adaptive physical education courses, and mobility aids.

The interview did not reveal any policies or practices that need to be modified in order to include individuals with disabilities in Mesa College programs or activities. In addition the interviewee indicated that there will be continued steps taken to ensure that all faculty and staff involved in the instructional programs at Mesa College are informed periodically of ADA requirements. This will be accomplished through dissemination and publication of information regarding ADA requirements and the responsibilities and rights of faculty, staff, and students. This will take place in school meetings and through activities conducted by the college DSP&S office. Access to information is also facilitated by the availability of

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

public notices, consent forms, announcements and other communications in accessible formats such as large print, Braille, ASCII diskette and tape recordings.

The respondent indicated that there are TDD services for students needing telephone access. The respondent was not aware of emergency telephone services provided by the program nor if there is direct TTD and modem access provided to the emergency services.

ADA Section II-8, 2000 requires a review to ensure that disabled individuals are not portrayed in an offensive or demeaning manner. The respondent indicated that a comprehensive review had been conducted that examined the portrayal of individuals with disabilities in written and audio-visual materials.

The interviewee stated that special programs and social and entertainment events at Mesa were architecturally accessible.

The respondent indicated that there were certain programs available only to full-time students. Any modification to these programs is considered on a case-by-case basis.

It was not clear from this interview if emergency evacuation procedures for individuals with disabilities are available and reviewed periodically. This respondent suggested that a future plan is to work with DSP&S to develop an evacuation procedure and publish the results to all staff and faculty.

The respondent indicated that faculty, staff, students, and the general public were informed that they could file a complaint based on college or district failure to accommodate a disability. She also indicated that there were planning or advisory boards on which program participants served and that accommodations have been provided to assist disabled participants in serving on these boards. The administrator cited the existence of college policies and procedures enacted to prohibit discrimination and the college policy to provide accommodation upon request.

The interviewee suggested the development of a college process to make the purchase of adaptive equipment a priority at the college. She felt that this would help to improve the accessibility of all computing equipment in the labs at the college. The administrator also urged that additional courses be offered using distance education technology and the Internet. This would improve access to these courses and programs of study for all students.

Program Eligibility

The respondent stated that there were no limits on the proportion of individuals with disabilities able to participate or enroll in college programs. There was no awareness of any pre-admission evaluation or testing for applicants in addition to districtwide assessment and placement testing. The nationally normed tests used for assessment and placement in the SDCCD have been validated for use locally. This validation has been corroborated by visiting audit teams and the state chancellor's office. Accommodations are made for students with disabilities to take placement tests when necessary. Information about a student's disability status is only collected voluntarily and all such information is kept confidential according to the participant. It was also noted that the admissions office is accessible to all students and that accommodations are made when needed to enable students with disabilities to come to the office.

Classroom and Curriculum

The participant agreed that when necessary, classes are reassigned or relocated to accessible locations to accommodate students with special needs. The respondent was aware of departmental or college time limits for the completion of degree requirements that could not be modified for students with disabilities. An example of a program that cannot be modified are those with external licensure requirements that may have time limits which can not be modified. This included students with hearing or vision loss or impairment, speaking difficulties, emotional or mental disabilities, or chronic health conditions. When students with these sorts of disabilities have to be excluded it was normally due to health and safety requirements, or state and federal licensing requirements. The participant indicated that students with visual or learning disabilities were provided with tape recorders in lieu of standard note-taking. Braille note taking devices are available for students who need them. Interpreters are available for students who need them. Guide dogs are permitted in all campus locations or meetings. Special accommodations were also available for students taking tests.

Substitution of required courses for students with disabilities is also allowed. All job placements include accommodations for those with disabling conditions. In general, library and learning resource materials are available to all students with disabilities. Readers and physical assistance is provided upon

request. Materials in alternative accessible formats and sign language interpreters are made available upon request. Computer access to information at the library and the labs are facilitated through adaptive computer technology.

Computers and Information Technology

This part of the interview and survey is designed to gather information about computer access for individuals with disabilities. According to the respondent, much of the available input technologies are accessible to disabled students. These include technological adaptations such as "sticky key" software, keyguards, trackballs, alternative labels for the keyboard and keypad, and other adaptive technologies. There is also output technology available to individuals with disabilities. These include output devices such as large monitors, speech synthesizers, magnifying closed circuit cameras, Braille printers, flasher screens, and screen magnification. All computing facilities and labs are accessible to individuals with disabilities however and all have adaptive technologies. The respondent indicated several adaptations available for individuals with disabilities including labels giving priority for use by those with disabilities, keyboards that are detachable and movable, monitors that are detachable and movable, and accessible power switches. The respondent also indicated that many relied on the High-Tech Center to assist with accommodation in computing technologies.

Employment

The respondent indicated that training and written material has been provided to staff involved in all employment related activities such as recruitment, hiring, interviewing, testing, training and supervising. The respondent did not feel that a training session on the ADA was needed. Departmental staff were familiar with typical forms of reasonable accommodation and notification of such accommodations is given to applicants. The participant indicated that job descriptions were current and up to date and that duty statements identify the essential functions of the job. She reaffirmed that the required skills, knowledge and abilities required for a position were related specifically to the demands of the job and the qualifications statements were written so as not to arbitrarily screen out applicants with disabilities. When physical requirements are included, they have been reviewed by Compensation or

Employment consultants. Internal job postings include information pertaining to reasonable accommodation for applicants and postings and notices are made available in alternative formats when requested. All job postings are displayed in accessible locations. Testing and interviews are given in accessible locations and accommodations are provided during the interview process when requested. All interview questions are job related and the interviewers know what questions can be asked of applicants with disabilities. In all aspects of employment, whether on the job, staff development, or in the workplace, the respondent indicated that accommodations and access are provided to all. The only uncertain area cited by the respondent was regarding physical access to certain areas used by employees during the course of the work day. There may be heavy doors that individuals with disabilities would find difficult to open, although there was not any elaboration as to which doors these might be. She indicated that the staff were aware that the ADA prohibits discrimination against applicants or employees who have a relationship or an association with a person with a disability.

Staff Focus Group

On February 24, 1997 a focus group of staff was conducted at Mesa to get their perspectives on the college compliance with the ADA and to further disseminate information to the staff at Mesa about the provisions of the ADA. Staff from many areas of college operations were represented in the six attendees that both participated in the group interviews and survey activities.

Access to Programs

The staff interviewed indicated knowledge of many individuals with disabilities who had currently identified themselves in various programs at the college. Staff indicated that since January 26, 1992 some modifications had been made to buildings and technology at Mesa College, including new windows for persons in wheelchairs and the closed caption television. There were mixed responses as to the provision of auxiliary aids or accommodations to individuals with disabilities in programs at Mesa College. Their comments reflected the divergence of views on this question and the places on campus with which they were familiar. Some cited the availability of interpreters and note takers for the hearing impaired. However others claimed that the Student Affairs Office on the campus was not accessible to many

individuals with disabilities, particularly those in wheelchairs. They cited cramped conditions in this office and high counters that could be modified to make the office more "disabled-friendly."

Staff were also divided on the question of whether they were aware of any policies or practices that needed to be modified in order to include individuals with disabilities in various programs or activities, particularly those held off-campus such as field trips. There was a concern that requests for accommodations needed to be completed within a reasonable period. One respondent complained of air that was dust-filled and unhealthy. The air cleaner she brought to the office was not sufficient to improve her working conditions which was complicated by an asthmatic condition. In her view asthma is considered a disability and an air filter should be seen as a reasonable accommodation for this disability.

Staff indicated that they were kept informed about ADA provisions through staff meetings, workshops, and staff development sessions. Some suggested that ADA requirements should be discussed in weekly staff meetings and these discussions should form the basis for planning for continued ADA implementation. Still other participants suggested annual workshops for faculty and staff to keep them apprised on new requirements and developments regarding ADA implementation.

Interestingly, although other respondents indicated that TDD services were generally available on the campus, the staff interviewed here, with the exception of one, indicated that such services were either unavailable or they did not know of such services. The staff indicated that while there were not TDD services in the financial aid office, these could be found in the student services vice-president's office, admissions office and career center. Some also indicated that there were several public TDD services on the campus. Interviewees indicated that there were no telephone emergency services provided in their work areas and neither was there direct TDD and modem access provided to an emergency service. When this service is needed the staff indicated that they would refer this to someone else on the campus or call 911. One staff member suggested that TDD's were needed in more offices on the campus in the event of an emergency involving individuals with disabilities. Another indicated a need for better staff training in this area so that better referrals to emergency services could be made.

Of the staff interviewed, only one participant indicated that public notices, consent forms, announcements, and other communications were provided in accessible formats. Three of the participants

said that such alternative formats were not available, while a fourth was not certain. Some suggested that this information should be provided in ASCII format on a diskette for greater accessibility and retrieval into alternative formats. Additional staff training was also cited as another method to help in the development of forms and information for people with sight impairments.

The ADA Title II Technical Assistance Manual states that a review of how individuals with disabilities are portrayed must be conducted to ensure that the portrayals are positive and not demeaning. Of the interviewees, five of the six either stated that no such review had been conducted or they did not know of such a review. They suggested that workshops or seminars be offered that provided guidelines on the proper portrayal of individuals with disabilities in official publications and announcements. They suggested a thorough review be undertaken to review all published college materials. One cited the existence of parking signs that used the word "handicapped" instead of the more correct term, "disabled."

There was uncertainty expressed by several of the respondents in the area of accessibility for all college events, including those held off campus. Two participants stated that not all events are accessible while three were not sure. They suggested that advertisements needed to be added to all announcements for college events describing the accessibility of the event for individuals with disabilities. In addition they suggested that a thorough review needs to be completed when an office is remodeled.

Three participants believed that campus events are programmatically accessible to individuals with disabilities. This refers to the provision of interpreters for the deaf, captioned videos, assistive listening devices, and large print or Braille handouts. One participant disagreed that all campus events were programatically accessible while two did not know.

The participants acknowledged in their comments that some programs are only offered on a full time basis (such as Allied Health programs) for students. Others cited financial aid regulations that define a full time student as one who enrolls in at least twelve units.

The ADA requires that emergency evacuation procedures for individuals with disabilities be reviewed so that access to evacuation in the event of an emergency is assured. The group cited the need for visual alarms and ramps on all multi-level buildings. Some members also suggested that egress or escape routes need to be more plainly visible with light signals to alert all individuals as to routes of

escape and exit, particularly those with hearing difficulties. Another suggestion was that a "buddy system" be established where individuals take responsibility for another in the event of an emergency.

Respondents appeared to be aware of the existence of a complaint process or how to file an unlawful discrimination complaint against the District. Only one person claimed not to know such a process existed. It was suggested that the procedure for filing complaints against the District be published and provided during new employee orientations.

The participation of individuals with disabilities on planning or advisory boards was discussed. One-half of the staff respondents believed that there were planning or campus advisory boards that had individuals with disabilities serving on them. Three did not know if individuals with disabilities served on such boards or in what capacity. The feeling expressed in response to the question of how to involve individuals with disabilities in various groups was that the Classified Senate would be happy to include more people in their meetings and activities.

Non-Architectural Barriers

As part of the college ADA Transition Plan, campuses are to identify structural barriers to access for individuals with disabilities. As part of this plan, the major architectural barriers have been identified, although smaller obstacles may exist such as furniture or equipment in inaccessible arrangements. Participants were asked to identify smaller architectural features that potentially limit access to a program. Participants cited doors that were difficult to open for individuals with a disability. They also stated that spaces between rows of computers were small and possibly too narrow. In neither of these examples were locations or specific computer labs mentioned. The door to the Financial Aid office was mentioned as needing push buttons to improve access for individuals with disabilities. One participant again reiterated that the Student Affairs office was cramped and difficult to access for individuals with disabilities. This person stated that this limited access also affected their outreach efforts and indicated that this situation needed to be changed right away. Another area identified was the Veterans office. It was felt that high counters limited access for individuals with disabilities in this office. The Dean's office doors do not permit a person in a wheelchair to enter, instead a person in a wheelchair would need to enter this area through another door somewhat further away. One group participant suggested Mesa College needed to

conduct a comprehensive review of all offices and other areas on campus to identify areas where access may be limited. This suggestion was echoed throughout the staff interviews.

Program Eligibility

Several of those interviewed suggested that their particular work area limited the number or proportion of individuals with disabilities who could participate in a program or activity. When probed on this question they indicated that staff using wheelchairs would not have enough space to move around or that students in wheelchairs are only able to use the first computers in each row (probably in a lab, although this was never stated). They also suggested that during peak periods with many students and staff on campus there is simply not enough space in various areas of the campus to accommodate individuals with disabilities. It is not clear from the interviews or surveys what specific areas are referred to in these observations on the campus. This may be answered more directly once a comprehensive review of the campus is undertaken by local and district staff.

The group indicated that following admission to programs inquiries about an applicant's disability were only collected on a voluntary basis and that such information was kept confidential.

Computers and Information Technology

In general, the staff group felt that adequate and reasonable accommodations had been made for access to computers and information technology by staff with disabilities. They also emphasized ergonomic improvements to prevent injuries. Trackballs, closed caption television, documentation on diskette in ASCII format, and screen magnification devices have been provided to staff. When there were questions, the staff in the high tech center for the disabled were consulted. Where computing stations were seen as inaccessible for individuals with disabilities, the group indicated that alternative areas were available to provide access. Comprehensive knowledge of the existing adaptive technology was not prevalent among the group, although a staff person from financial aid indicated that no adaptive technology in this area was available. This suggests that training in this area may be warranted.

Employment

Staff interviewees were equally divided on whether training or written material on Title 1 of the ADA (employment related regulations) had been provided to staff involved in any employment related activities such as preparing job descriptions, advertising, interviewing, testing, hiring, training, and supervising. All agreed however that a training session on the ADA was needed. They cited reasons such as low level of staff awareness on typical forms of accommodations such as wheelchair access, sign language interpreters, note takers, audio materials, large print, Braille materials, or reasonable job modification or restructuring. Not all interviewees believed that internal departmental application forms include notice that reasonable accommodation will be provided when requested by individuals with disabilities. Most were not certain if reasonable accommodation was provided during the application process when requested by individuals with disabilities. A majority felt that job descriptions were current and up-to-date and that duty statements detailed the essential functions of the job. All agreed that the required skills, knowledge, and abilities directly related to specific job duties were included on the job descriptions. None believed that qualification statements were written such that they could improperly screen out applicants with disabilities. Most agreed that the physical requirements of the job had been reviewed by Compensation and Employment consultants. Most believed that job postings were accessible to individuals with disabilities either through convenient locations, alternate formats, and through other accommodations. On the question of the validation of employment related tests there was less unanimity on whether these were given to all applicants and not just those with disabilities. Most were not certain if reasonable accommodations were provided during the testing process when requested by individuals with disabilities. Two of the participants however thought this was provided upon request. A majority of the interviewees agreed that employment interviews were conducted in physically accessible locations and that reasonable accommodations were provided. They also agreed that all interview questions were job-related, and that interviewers were aware of both proper and improper questions of individuals with disabilities during the interview process. The group was equally divided on the question regarding reasonable accommodation in all phases of employment. One stated that the employment process was both slow and difficult in terms of making reasonable accommodations for applicants with disabilities. One interviewee

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

indicated that a contact person in the program or work area needs to be identified with the sole task of making certain that reasonable accommodation was provided. In this person's opinion, this should be done regardless of any cost consideration.

Two of the interviewees indicated that reasonable accommodation was not provided when requested which would have allowed employees with disabilities to participate in training or professional development activities. One respondent knew of a situation where this had occurred while the rest did not know. One participant indicated that there was a lack of "follow-through" on requests for accommodations to enable employees with disabilities to participate at these events. This person suggested that any presentation using television must have closed captions, regardless of whether a request is made for this or not. Not all respondents agreed that the areas used by employees including work areas, rest rooms and lounges, and lunchrooms were physically accessible. Five of the six respondents indicated that in general college staff were aware that the ADA prohibits discrimination against applicants or employees who have a relationship or an association with a person with a disability.

General Comments

There were divergent views found on the status of complete ADA implementation at the college. Some staff interviewed felt that most provisions on accessibility of programs, technology, employment, and campus areas had been or will be accomplished. Others disagreed citing specific areas where access needed to be improved. An area consistently cited was the Student Affairs office which was viewed by one participant as cramped and difficult for individuals with disabilities to negotiate easily. Most tended to agree that a general lack of space on a very busy college campus is a factor inhibiting access in many areas. There also appears to be varied interpretation on what constitutes reasonable access and accommodation. While some feel that access is provided through allocating workstations or designating doors for disabled person to use or providing alternative formats or technologies upon request, others feel that such accommodations and alternative formats must be provided at all times regardless of whether a request is made. There was a general consensus that a thorough campus review must be conducted to identify non-structural barriers to access from admissions to employment. In addition, staff training was advocated so that accommodation and access for individuals with disabilities could be improved.

Focus Group 5 and 6: Student Services and DSP&S Department Staff

On February 24, 1997, a student services staff member was interviewed regarding ADA implementation. As with the academic management survey, the completed written survey for the student services area reflects the views of several individuals in the student services function at Mesa College. Two days later, a group of DSP&S staff was convened. For this part of the report, the responses of the seven participants were combined for summary purposes. Their comments and responses are summarized below.

There was a high general level of awareness about the presence of individuals with disabilities in their particular programs. The group was able to identify in some detail modifications that had been made to increase accessibility for disabled persons since January 26, 1992. Among these modifications were a more notification of services provided by DSP&S such as computer assistive technology, tutoring, and test proctoring services. Other changes since January of 1992 include adjusted job duties to decrease keyboarding, tape recorders, specialized instruction, an improved process for requests for accommodations, lowered counters in admissions, TTY or TDD, individual assistance, training, auxiliary aids, enlarged print, CACTI, sign language interpreters, and adaptive computers. These modifications were made in addition to the High-Tech center for students with disabilities mentioned earlier in this report. The only concern raised in this area was a general need for continued staff development and training to better accommodate individuals with disabilities. Participants cited the need for continuous and ongoing discussion of access issues during staff meetings and the regular dissemination of information to deans and department leaders. Some suggested that a packet of information materials for DSP&S employees be developed for distribution.

In the area of communications, all programs indicated having a TTY or a TDD. According to participants, the location of these communications devices is listed on a map of the campus. Not all agreed that telephone emergency services or provisions to ensure that public notices and other forms are in accessible formats. Many were unaware whether such emergency services existed in accessible formats. It was noted that there was no TTY available for use by faculty or by dispatch services. This would

improve access to emergency services. College student services programs do have provisions to ensure that public notices and documents are provided in alternative formats.

All were in agreement that materials and public information notices are reviewed regularly to ensure a positive portrayal of individuals with disabilities. Specific changes were made to brochures and the college catalog as a result of this review. There was general agreement on the accessibility of all student services and programs on the campus both architecturally (lack of structural barriers) and programmatically (provision of materials and proceedings in alternative formats). These were noted by other groups earlier in this report.

Campus events are programmatically accessible to individuals with disabilities through the provision of interpreters, captioned video, assistive listening devices and special format programs. As noted by other groups most did not know that students with disabilities could take less than a full time course load because of their limitations. Most did not know if such provisions existed at Mesa College. However as with other interviews some cited that certain programs such as those in the health professions required full time attendance of all admitted students. When possible, modifications are made on a case-by-case basis.

A comprehensive plan for emergency evacuation procedures for individuals with disabilities was cited by the student services and DSP&S interviewees. Although a safety manual exists, maps showing routes of egress and escape are not plainly visible or staff are not aware of them. One person noted that emergency alarms in the student services building need to be augmented with flashing lights for the hearing impaired. Exit ramps in the multi-level buildings was also noted as a potential problem by group members. As was noted by the classified staff interviewees, an overall campus wide plan for emergency evacuation of faculty, staff, and individuals with disabilities needs to be developed and disseminated widely to prepare for any unknown emergency circumstance.

Access and information concerning grievance filing procedures is provided for individuals with disabilities as is participation on planning or advisory boards on the campus. Some indicated that the district ADA compliance officer has been asked to review policies in several areas to ensure that individuals with disabilities are aware of their right to file complaints and grievances. Provision to this

information is currently provided by the 504 Informal Complaint process and the ADA local compliance officer.

Several smaller architectural features that were identified by participants as limiting access to individuals with disabilities. Interviewees cited limited classroom access and space on campus in general (this theme was echoed across several interviews), more accessible computer work stations, difficult door handles and heavy doors. The high-tech center (HTC) was cited for being too small and lacking sufficient computers. Some suggested that the Learning Accommodation Lab (LAL) and HTC be moved closer together to make better use of limited staff and resources and to have extended lab hours for individuals with disabilities. Most pressed for greater classroom space.

Program Eligibility

The group agreed that limits were not placed on the number of individuals eligible for participation and that no pre-admission evaluation or testing for applicants was required for admission to college programs. The Admissions office was provided information about a person's disability was only on a voluntary basis. However the DSP&S staff interviewed indicated that following admission, inquiries about an applicant's disability are not necessarily done only on a voluntary basis. They indicated that to receive state funding the DSP&S office must verify that students have one or more verifiable disabilities. When it is collected the participants maintained that all information is kept confidential. In other instances when information about a person's disability is collected the staff indicated that it is to prepare for accommodation and to improve access, not for tracking or admissions information. On the issue of access to the admissions process and office, all maintained that the admissions office is physically and programmatically accessible. The admissions process is facilitated through the use of the telephone registration system and the use of the California Relay Service.

Classrooms and Curriculum

Registration for students with disabilities is assured through priority enrollment, individual assistance, and early educational planning. The Admissions office provides special equipment in addition to Classtalk and individual assistance to students needing help as noted above. The interviewees mentioned that when necessary, classes are reassigned or meetings relocated from inaccessible to

accessible rooms in order to accommodate students or faculty with mobility impairments. The DSP&S staff were not aware of any departmental or college time limits for degree completion requirements that could not be modified for students with disabilities. With the exception of the nursing program, none of the participants could cite a particular program as being unavailable to individuals with disabilities. In the case of nursing or physical therapy, individuals with vision difficulties may be excluded because of health and safety requirements of these programs.

In general, the DSP&S interviewees confirmed that tape recorders were permitted in class sessions as were Braille note taking devices and computers. Respondents also indicated that attendants, note takers, and sign language interpreters, were available for students with disabilities. Certified guide, service, and signal dogs were permitted in all classes and meeting rooms. Accommodations were made for individuals with disabilities who need to take tests or exams in an alternate format such as oral exams, large print, readers, scribes, time extensions, and alternate locations. A test proctoring service is also provided through DSP&S. To ease student registration, individuals with disabilities have the option of accessing the telephone registration system using a TTY, or receiving registration assistance through the DSP&S program.

Computers and Information Technology

Both the Student Services and the DSP&S staff maintained that access to computer technology was facilitated through the availability of several modifications. Among these were "sticky-key" software, keyguards, trackballs, adaptive computers, ergonomic keyboards, dictation software, screen readers, software to enlarge displays and scanners. Output modifications and technologies available include large monitors, screen magnification software, speech synthesizers, closed circuit television cameras, screen flashers, "Links," "Vocal Eyes," and "Windoweyes" screen readers. In addition, interviewees noted that voice recognition software was available, as well as a "mouse-free" system. However, the use of the mouse-free system input device was not possible on networked machines. Unlike most interviewees, the DSP&S group was aware of training and information provided to consultants to make them more sensitive and understanding of the special problems individuals with disabilities confront. Documentation for computer hardware and software was also available in a number of alternative formats including Braille,

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

audio tape, large print, ASCII, videotape, and through assistance from the high tech center. The majority of respondents felt that the computing facilities were offered in accessible locations. The only exception cited was the campus network and a perception by one participant that not enough software or hardware accommodations were available in all the labs on campus. In general respondents felt that the adaptive technology was available at the same times and locations as other computing facilities on campus. One respondent stated that the HTC was closed at times other facilities were open and that this may negatively affect access for individuals with disabilities. A similar pattern was found with respect to the question of whether adapted computers were located in the same room as other computers. Five agreed with that statement while one disagreed. Within the computing labs, respondents felt that adequate access was provided to individuals with disabilities. Examples cited were detachable keyboards and monitors, accessible disk drives and peripherals, easily reached power strips, raised dot indicators on keyboards and Braille labels. Labels and signs giving priority use to individuals with disabilities were posted and visible in the computing facilities.

Employment

With the exception of the student services staff person, all respondents stated that training or written material on Title 1 (employment) of the ADA has been provided to staff involved in any employment related activities. Of the seven interviewed, two indicated that additional training on the ADA would be helpful. It was indicated that departmental staff were familiar with typical forms of reasonable accommodations such as wheelchair access, sign language interpreters, note takers and other modifications to the work environment. Two respondents indicated that internal departmental application forms did not include notice that reasonable accommodations will be provided when requested. However five did say that such notice was provided. There was general agreement that reasonable accommodations were provided during the application process when requested by applicants with disabilities. Most felt that job descriptions were current and up-to-date and that duty statements identified the essential functions of the job. None felt that qualification statements were written to improperly screen out individuals with disabilities. Internal job postings are made available in alternative formats and displayed in accessible locations according to the respondents. Most felt that when applicants are tested these tests are given

uniformly to all applicants, not just to individuals with disabilities and that reasonable accommodations are provided during the testing process when requested by individuals with disabilities. There was consensus that employment interviews were conducted in physically accessible locations and that reasonable accommodations were provided. Interview questions were job related and interviewers were sensitive and trained in knowing the types of questions suitable for individuals with disabilities. Staff development and training is made accessible to individuals with disabilities and nearly all areas used by staff are accessible to individuals with disabilities. One respondent however believed that the faculty lounge was not physically accessible. In general respondents believed that the college staff were aware that the ADA prohibits discrimination against applicants and employees who have a relationship or an association with a person with a disability. No training in this area was cited by the respondents as necessary at this time.

Focus Group 7: Faculty

In late February, 1997, four faculty were interviewed at Mesa College regarding ADA implementation. The following summarizes their responses.

In the areas of access to programs, most indicated that modifications to courses syllabi had been made to notify students to identify any special needs they might have. Faculty respondents also indicated that portable computers are allowed in their classroom and tables were lowered for individuals using wheelchairs. In addition auxiliary aids and accommodations were provided to individuals with disabilities, and the tape recording of lectures is permitted. Other accommodations included tutoring, raised study tables, and individualized assistance with testing. Most cited DSP&S as a key resource on the campus in this area. They could not identify any policy or practice that needed to be modified to better include individuals with disabilities in their particular program other than a general concern raised in prior interviews that most rooms are overcrowded and that field trips can be difficult, particularly in areas such as field archaeology. One respondent noted that the locker room needed an upgrade to make it more accessible. To remain informed and current on the status of ADA implementation at the college faculty respondents cited the need for more written materials, more information disseminated at school or department meetings and better planning for facilities modification.

None of these interviewees had a TDD in their program, however most either were not aware of or indicated that telephone emergency services were not available in their programs to students with disabilities, but that access was available on the campus and through the DSP&S office. This group in general indicated that materials had been reviewed to determine the fair portrayal of disabled persons in notices and public information. Two of the respondents felt that all instructional programs were architecturally accessible and that potential users were informed of this through the course syllabi. There was a general perception that campus events were both structurally and programmatically accessible to individuals with disabilities. Program accessibility was accomplished through interpreters and captioned videos.

This group generally believed that there were not programs available to only full time students. Unlike prior groups which cited specific programs, the faculty group did not identify any such programs requiring a full time course load. Clearly perceptions on the part of campus constituents differ on this full time course load question in various programs.

The awareness of emergency escape or egress routes varied considerably. The impression is that depending on what part of the campus one is on, one can be either well informed of emergency escape routes or poorly informed. The feeling was that greater planning and dissemination of this information needs to be conducted. Many felt that they had not received adequate information or training in this important area. In addition many stated that each room at the campus should have emergency routes posted and obvious. Respondents were unaware of any non-structural measures to improve access that would serve as an alternative to structurally removing a major architectural barrier in their program. However, many seemed unaware of what their role or responsibility in ADA implementation ought to be. Many claimed that their role had not been adequately explained to them nor made clear.

Faculty respondents indicated that persons involved in their instructional programs were aware of the option of filing unlawful discrimination complaints based on the district's failure to accommodate a disability.

In the area of program eligibility, no respondent stated that there was a limit on the proportion of individuals with disabilities admitted to their instructional programs. None believed that pre-admission

inquiries as to a person's disability status was conducted or allowed. Respondents generally felt that the mission of the college was to provide the greatest access to the greatest number. Information from individuals with disabilities is collected only on voluntary basis and such information is confidential. Faculty respondents claimed that when necessary classes are reassigned or relocated to accessible locations to accommodate individuals with disabilities. Respondents did cite certain programs that due to licensure requirements or degree stipulations could not be modified. Certain programs were noted as being inaccessible to students with loss of vision, speaking impairments (speech courses), mobility impairments (field archaeology), and coordination problems (health and safety concerns in nursing). Some physical education programs such as tennis were cited as being inaccessible to students with disabilities. The faculty were emphatic that determination of health risk needed to be conducted by a physician for chronic health conditions, not by local staff who were untrained in this area.

Faculty respondents noted that students with visual impairments were allowed to use tape recorders in their classes. In addition Braille note taking devices, attendants and note takers, guide dogs and special arrangements were allowed for students needing modifications to testing. Two respondents believe that reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities requiring substitution of required courses could be made. No concerns were voiced regarding access to internships or field placements and most believed that libraries and reading rooms were accessible to individuals with disabilities. In the classroom, provisions for disabled students were made when necessary. This includes testing, proctoring for exams, note takers, and other modifications. Computing facilities are both physically and programmatically accessible to individuals with disabilities and adaptive technology is available in the same rooms and at the same times as traditional technologies.

Employment

Approximately one-half of the interviewees were aware of training or written material on the employment regulations of the ADA. As with other groups, it was felt that training on the provisions of the ADA for faculty was needed as many appeared unfamiliar with the employment related provisions of the Act. Most believed that the application, testing, and staff development processes for applicants and staff were accessible and that reasonable accommodation was provided when necessary. Most were uncertain if

job descriptions in their departments were current and up-to-date or if physical requirements of jobs had been reviewed by compensation or employment consultants. There was general uncertainty as to whether qualification statements referred to essential functions of a job or if these statements were written so as not to improperly screen out people with disabilities. Most seemed unaware or poorly informed as to the contents of internal job postings with regard to providing notice to applicants with disabilities of the availability of reasonable accommodations. Most did not know if employment tests had been validated nor whether they were given solely to individuals with disabilities.

Faculty respondents had greater knowledge about the interview procedures and practices for hiring staff. Most believed that interview questions were job related and that interview committees were aware of what questions could be properly asked of individuals with disabilities. Interviews were scheduled in accessible locations. There was uncertainty regarding the provision of reasonable accommodation when requested to enable staff with disabilities to participate in staff development or training functions. There was also disagreement, as was found with other interviewees, on the question of accessibility of all areas used by employees during the work day. For the most part, this group seemed less aware of many of the employment related aspects of ADA. Their call for training, written materials, and additional staff development appears warranted.

College Police

Staff from the college police department were also interviewed in a group that met in February at Mesa College. No staff from the facilities or business areas of the college participated in the survey or interview process for this report.

College police have received additional training and instruction since January 26, 1992 on implementing various provisions of the ADA. Currently officers assist students to class when safety is a concern, bike racks have been moved to clear walkways and egress routes, and skateboarding and bicycle riding on campus have been curtailed partly out of safety concerns for individuals with disabilities. Staff interviewed indicated that their program provided auxiliary aids and accommodations to individuals with disabilities and that the work space was adequate and accessible for staff and students with disabilities.

When queried, the college police could not identify any policies or practices that needed modification to enable more individuals with disabilities to participate in programs and activities. Although the college police cannot hire officers who have disabilities, they are able to hire office staff with disabilities as long as the health and safety of the officers or the people they serve are not threatened. Currently the college police do not have a TDD but they have identified the acquisition of one as a goal of the department. Telephone emergency services are provided and wheelchair level emergency phones on campus are provided. The college police program does not have provisions to ensure that public notices, consent forms, and other communications can be made readily available in accessible formats. To their knowledge, no review of public announcements or publications with regard to the portrayal of individuals with disabilities has taken place. The college police believe that all programs are architecturally accessible and that campus events are both structurally accessible and programmatically accessible through the provision of special equipment and sign language interpreters at these events.

Contrary to the views held by many other interviewees, the college police believe that emergency evacuation routes have been designated for each building and that these routes are posted in every room. However other groups displayed little or no knowledge of this important observation. Since emergency evacuation is a vital concern, it seems that training and staff development are needed here. What has occurred to this point has not reached critical sectors of the campus community. More and better planning appear to be needed in this area.

However as with other staff interviewed, the option of filing discrimination complaints against the district has received widespread publicity. Most seem aware of this option. The college police could not identify any college planning or advisory boards on which individuals with disabilities serve, nor were they aware of any area that could be made more accessible through smaller, non structural modifications.

This group did not respond to questions regarding computing or computing technology, believing this area not within their purview. Their responses to program eligibility were also minimal hence they will not be discussed here.

In the area of employment there was clear agreement that training or written material on the employment related provisions of the ADA have been provided to staff involved in employment related

activities. Unlike other Mesa college representatives, the college police were not interested in a training session on the ADA. They responded that departmental staff were familiar with typical forms of reasonable forms of accommodation and that these accommodations are provided upon request to both applicants and staff with disabilities. Job descriptions in their area are current and identify the essential functions of the job. Qualification statements are written so as not to improperly screen out individuals with disabilities. The interviewee was not aware if job postings were made available in alternative formats when requested by applicants. Police training standards apply to all applicants regardless of disability status and are applied uniformly to all applicants. According to the college police, all employment related provisions of the ADA are met in this department.

Focus Group 9: Special Admit Programs

This focus group was comprised of one individual from each special admit program. These individuals were interviewed to determine access and awareness issues for programs that had special requirements for students to participate. Their results when they differ substantially from prior group findings will be presented below. This group appeared to rely on the DSP&S office and staff on the Mesa campus. These special admit program representatives interviewed felt that their programs provided reasonable accommodations to individuals with disabilities. This was done through the provision of auxiliary aids and modifications made for access and accommodation of individuals with disabilities. For example the interviewees stated that their program had a TDD and that public notices and other documents were available in alternative formats. They stated that a comprehensive review had taken place since January 26, 1992 of how individuals with disabilities are portrayed in program documents and publications.

These participants responded that while there were programs which are restricted only to full time students there are others that can accommodate students with disabilities who can only enroll part time. Included among these are the programs for physical therapist assistants, radiologic technicians, animal health technicians, registered dental assistant, medical assistant, and health information technician. Interviewees believed that faculty, staff and the general public were informed of the option of filing unlawful discrimination complaints based on the failure to reasonably accommodate a disability. In the

view of respondents, no person, regardless of disability status is excluded from participating on any board or policy making body. None of these respondents were aware of any non-structural modifications that could be made to enhance program or physical accessibility in their particular programs.

None of the respondents indicated that the programs they work with limited the number or proportion of individuals with disabilities who may participate in a program or activity. Some of the programs however do require pre-admission evaluation or testing for applicants in addition to standardized testing. For example some require an special admission placement test and an interview process. Respondents were not aware if these special admissions tests had been validated. They also did not respond as to how they might go about validating such instruments. They believe that, consistent with applicable federal law that the admissions tests in place reflect aptitude or achievement rather than impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills. Alternate admissions tests are made available to applicants with disabilities. In the majority of their responses, this group stated that the DSP&S program staff help them to make necessary modifications to increase access to their particular program. Alternate admissions tests are administered in accessible locations and no individuals with disabilities are discouraged from applying to a particular program. This is consistent with the provisions of the ADA.

In the area of classrooms and curricula, the interviewees responded that special accommodations and modifications are made for individuals with disabilities. These include those listed earlier under the faculty and academic manager responses and include large print, sign language interpreters, note takers, tape recorders, extra time for testing, and services offered by DSP&S. The only instance where students are not permitted to substitute required courses is where state licensing requirements prohibit such practices.

In general, this group felt that adequate access was provided and that there were not any non-structural barriers to full participation to disabled persons on the Mesa campus. When necessary, auxiliary aids are provided to students to assist them in participating. Referral to the DSP&S office was a frequent response. None of the respondents were aware of any changes that needed to be made to facilitate participation by students with disabilities.

Focus Group 10: SDCCD Site Compliance Officers (SCO's)

The final group interviewed was SCO's from across the SDCCD. These individuals are primarily responsible for monitoring local compliance with the ADA on their respective campuses or in their particular programs. They coordinate and monitor complaints and investigate discrimination allegations. All SCO's invited attended the focus group meeting on November 14, 1997. For this section, comments from the Mesa SCO will be noted and summarized. The Mesa SCO relies on a variety of methods to ensure awareness of ADA regulations and policies. Among these are FLEX day activities, catalogs, class schedules, Job Fairs and library reference material. The Mesa SCO noted that training and written material on the ADA had been provided to staff involved in employment related activities but these have not been widely disseminated to the campus community through systematic staff development and training.

There was general uncertainty that job announcements, flyers, and information were all in accessible formats and that required skills and knowledge were specifically related to specific job duties. These materials and job demands were also reviewed by compensation and employment staff and consultants. The SCO's generally corroborated the observations of the other focus groups in the areas of employment and access to the campus for individuals with disabilities. No limitations were cited to any aspects of employment related activities for individuals with disabilities.

General Comments

Although most staff and faculty interviewed appeared to be confident that most of the accessibility and accommodation components were implemented, there appeared to be significant gaps in knowledge and process in many vital areas. While some felt that training and dissemination had been adequate, most did not. Awareness of the problems facing individuals with disabilities on the college campus was low for many of the groups interviewed. There appeared to be a stronger call for more training and coordination on this, the non-structural component of the ADA. Some felt that comprehensive planning and training has not been systematically conducted and there were clear areas for improvement of awareness and practices. The absence of training on evacuation routes, the need for visual alarms, more intensive and relevant staff development, greater dissemination of training materials and information about the ADA were all cited as needs. Some perceive the information flow to be sporadic and spotty. Tremendous emphasis seems to

have been placed for example on how to file complaints against the district, but less emphasis placed on how one accommodates differences, develops alternate methods for inclusion, or safely evacuates individuals with disabilities during emergencies. Notices and postings are often inconveniently located or placed. There are not regular announcements, updates, or newsletters. Some suggested that a list of relevant reports or policies in a user-friendly format be produced for dissemination. Photocopying regulations when questions are posed is not viewed as an accessible nor helpful source of information when attempting to plan and not just respond to ADA related questions. Some cited a lack of adequate training for front line supervisors and stated that more training on the ADA is needed. This training should not just be restricted to academic managers, but be accessible to faculty, staff, students, and members of the community. Late afternoon forums or evening training sessions were also recommended so that there is greater attendance and thus greater awareness of the non-structural components of the ADA.

For a complete review of the focus group responses, the field notes and summaries are located in the Research and Planning Office.